

Netanyahu Fires Back, Rebukes Obama Administration

The war of words between Israel and the Obama administration ramped up on Wednesday as Secretary of State John Kerry delivered a Middle East peace speech on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Kerry's speech was almost as "unbalanced" as the anti-Israel resolution passed at the Security Council last week.

"Secretary Kerry paid lip service to the unrelenting campaign of terrorism that has been waged by the Palestinians against the Jewish state for nearly a century," Netanyahu said in reaction to Kerry's speech.

The U.S. abstained from a vote in the Security Council against Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria, also known as the West Bank, allowing the resolution to pass.

"What he did was to spend most of his speech blaming Israel for the lack of peace by passionately condemning a policy of enabling Jews to live in their historic homeland and in their eternal capital, Jerusalem," Netanyahu said.

In a televised speech, Kerry spoke for well over an hour, much of it bashing Israel for building Jewish communities in its biblical homeland, including Jerusalem, where Palestinians want a future state.

"The Israeli prime minister publicly supports a two-state solution, but his current coalition is the most right-wing in Israeli history, with an agenda driven by the most extreme elements," Kerry said. He said Israeli policies were "leading toward one state."

Kerry said Israeli settlements are ruining the dream of a two-state solution so the U.S. couldn't veto the resolution.

"In the end, we could not in good conscience protect the most extreme elements of the settler movement as it tries to destroy the two-state solution," he said.

Netanyahu fired back.

"Israelis do not need to be lectured about the importance of peace by foreign leaders. Israel's hand has been extended in peace to its neighbors from day one, from its very first day," he said.

Israel and the Palestinians have worked on the two-state solution for more than 20 years. Israel gave up territory and got terror in return. Now Israelis are looking forward to working with a new U.S. administration.

"We're certainly looking forward to working together with the new administration on strengthening Israel," Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett said.

"Look at the paradox here. The whole region is in chaos. Just two hours from here in Syria, there's a genocide going on where they've murdered half a million women, children and innocent men, and yet the U.N. Security Council has done nothing," Bennett told CBN News.

Bennett said the Obama administration is trying to tie President-elect Donald Trump's hands with the U.N. resolution.

"It's not going to work," Bennett said. "You know Jerusalem has been our capital for well over 3,000 years. No U.N. resolution will change that. No U.N. resolution can change history."

A so-called peace conference in Paris is scheduled for just days before the inauguration, and many say nothing good will come out of it. Others are just holding their breath until

Trump takes office. {eoa}

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